

# **PRACTICE GUIDE FOR MASTER DEGREE PROGRAMME IN SOCIAL WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

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**PRACTICE GUIDE FOR MASTER DEGREE  
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## Preamble

Professional activity of social worker is based on competences that enable to develop professional practice (in children, youth and other social service institutions/organizations) applying theoretical social work models, scientific research data, reflecting experience gained in practice. Master studies in higher schools include assimilating academic knowledge at universities and student's learning (self-learning) in practice institutions – social service organizations. Evaluation of student professional learning in practice, development of adequate cooperation interaction between students, university lecturers and social work professionals are recognized in study process.

Academic research practice is related to programme subjects of social work studies. Gained theoretical knowledge and skills are applied into practice environment while carrying out research programme/project, presenting and discussing about research methodology and research results. Reflected practice process is oriented towards providing help for the learner to improve his professional competence, to extend and consolidate knowledge from practice while participating in individual and group supervisions. During these supervisions, students join together in practice and research activities, evaluate them, analyze together in discussion with other practice participants using their reflected experience. Opportunities to reconsider and name tough professional activity situations, individually evaluate their experience of learning in practice and the needs to improve their professional competences are given to students with the help of supervision method.

Prepared methodological tool „Practice Guide for Master Degree Programme in Social Work with Children and Youth“ addresses social work Master study students to develop purposefully their competences, while implementing study research practice tasks. This aims the master students to perceive the importance of science and practice, present their fulfilled researches to practitioners and discuss the value for changes. Conception features of reflective social work practice, basic study practice concepts, aims are revealed in methodological measures, as well as practice

organization issues, roles and responsibilities of practice participants, evaluation criteria of practice results, recommendations for research project and research report, organization possibilities of student reflection are discussed.

Methodological tool „Practice Guide for Master Degree Programme in Social Work with Children and Youth“ is created for Master students who study social work, social work with children and youth, as well as for their practice supervisors, practice institutions where practice is carried out.

# **1. Concept of Practice in Social Work Master's Degree Programme**

## **1.1. Studies based on learning paradigm**

The change of educational paradigm from teaching to learning, which causes changes in higher education, is also inevitable in today's information and knowledge society. Today it is clear that continuous learning is an individual's and society's response to a rapid technological progress, which causes the rapid obsolescence of knowledge, so the new generation of learners, who seek the higher education, should be aware and responsible students purposefully seeking the necessary knowledge, willing to take responsibility for their own learning and take an active role (Jucevičienė, 2007).

Learning paradigm forms a new teaching/learning process and mission of its aim. Learning-based educational system seeks not to force a learner to repeat the truths, but encourages him to master different training/learning techniques and methods that enable freely to identify, select and successfully adapt the knowledge needed for specific activities, searching for individual and different ways to solve problems (Valuckienė, 2009). Learning paradigm is based on understanding that the learning is an active and constructive process. Learning paradigm is based on the fundamental principles of constructivism, which, according to Uden and Beaumont (2006), states the following: understanding arises from interaction with the environment; cognitive conflict stimulates studies; knowledge is acquired through social activities and individual analysis of those activities; new knowledge and skills are built on past experience; reflection is the necessary condition for personal development; advice rather than the transfer of expert knowledge encourage personal development (according to Pukelis and Savickienė, 2011). Students acquire knowledge, skills and values through the cognitive, social and experiential interactions.

This indicates that the learning environment is characterized as student-centred. The student-centred education has the following characteristics:

- There is a shift in focus from the teacher and what is taught, to the learner and what is learned.

- A student-centred approach to learning involves a different relationship between teacher and learner, whereby the teacher becomes a facilitator, and where the responsibility for learning is shared, and the learning is ‘negotiated’.
- The process approaches learners as individuals – taking account of their particular backgrounds, experiences, perceptual frameworks, learning style and needs.
- The learners ‘construct’ their own meaning by pro-active learning, discovery and
- reflection. The teacher builds critical thinking as part of the learning process.
- There is often a stress on interdisciplinarity, with the goal of attaining a higher level,
- generic skills and knowledge.
- The learner is involved in determining what is learned.
- Student-centred learning is focused on outcomes, rather than inputs.
- The learning process is not about transfer and restitution of knowledge, but about deeper understanding and critical thinking.
- Assessment is generally formative, and feedback is continuous.
- A student-centred approach makes it flexible and easier to develop blended teaching models and to recognise prior learning (Sursock and Smidt, 2010, p. 32).

According to Jucevičienė and Tautkevičienė, the student-centred learning environment can be characterized “as a space in which the learner, through interaction with information sources as well as with more experienced individuals, acting in constructive, willing, consciously purposeful and reflective way, acquires the knowledge, skills and values.” (2004, p. 102).

It is emphasized that in the student-centred learning environment the learning skills and learning styles of students are different. Therefore, when creating the student-centred learning environment it is important to evaluate the individual differences of students: the current competence, attitude towards learning, learning needs and motivation, and individual learning styles (Tautkevičienė, 2004).

Some scholars (Jarvis, 2001; Sursock and Smidt, 2010; Jucevičienė, 2001; Lipinskienė, 2002; Valuckienė, 2009; etc.) note that the position of educator



is changing in the student-centred learning environment – the educator turns into the participant of a learning process who studies along with others. The educator does not demonstrate himself as an undisputable authority of experience, but rather seeks to realize the pedagogical partnerships, create favourable educational environments, direct the students to organize their own learning and take responsibility for the results and be the key players in the process. The educator acts as a mediator, mentor, agent provocateur and learning consultant in such studies.

Some research (Jaques, 2000; Teresevičienė and Gedvilienė, 2000; Barfield, 2003; Gupta, 2004; etc.) show that educational innovations, based on strategies of constructivist self-regulation and cooperative learning, facilitate students becoming independent, provide opportunity for learning reflection, develop transferable skills which are needed in the modern world of work – problem solving, critical thinking, effective communication and co-operation, autonomous learning (according to Burkšaitienė, 2006).

## **1.2. Reflection on experience-based learning**

Complexity of social work as a profession, which consists of reflected contemplative social worker's competence model outlining the need of link between the theory and practice, and interaction between personal and professional experience, is emphasised in all schools of social work in the world (Dirgėlienė, 2008).

A significant role in social work studies is allocated to students' professional education during their practice, integrating a reflective learning method. It is important to train the reflectively thinking specialist, who can detect and evaluate social problems in practice and be able to enable a person in a changing, complex and multidimensional social environment (Dirgėlienė and Kiaunytė, 2008). In Global standards for social work education and profession (Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training of the Social Work Profession, 2004), it is noted that a significant part of the study programs must be allocated to the practical preparation of students and development of reflection skills. That responds with the goals of today's higher education, which are focused on students' ability continuously to learn through the ability to reflect on experience in developing their, as future specialists, total competence (Bubnys, 2009).

Issues of students experience use and its analysis are actualized in the educational process by many foreign (Ramsty, 2003; Osterman and Kottkamp, 2004; Johns, 2004; Moon, 2004; Boud, Keough and Walker, 2005; Pollard, 2005; etc.) and Lithuanian scientists (Gedvilienė and Teresevičienė, 2001; Žydzūnaitė, 2001; Baranauskienė, 2002; Ivanauskienė and Liobikienė, 2005; Jucevičienė, 2001, 2006; Zuzevičiūtė, 2005; Bubnys, 2009, 2012; Raudeliūnaitė, 2010; Lukošūnienė, 2011; Petrauskienė and Raudeliūnaitė, 2012; etc.). The reflection is identified as an important condition for learning from experience. The reflection in learning process helps students to monitor themselves, change the objectives and structure of their activities, communicate and cooperate with other people and sources of information, analyse the achievements and limitations of their activities or learning (Jucevičienė, 2007). Scientific literature which analyses the reflective learning problems is based on D. A. Kolb (1984) model of reflective learning. This model highlights the stages of experience-based learning: the specific experience, reflective observation, analysis of experience, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation.

The specific experience is treated as the beginning of a learning cycle – events in person's activities. The reflective observation is the critical observation of activities and/or training and its analysis. At the stage of abstract conceptualization runs conceptualization of the analysed experience, searching for a deeper meaning, new ideas, information, strategies and methods of activities. It is used to think about the adaptation of conceptual meanings in a new situation. At the experimental stage, re-conceptualization assumptions and operating methods are tested in practice, new experiences are gained and the learned things are consciously comprehended. This encourages the planning of new experiences.

Reflective learning has the cycle of several stages: action stage – what I have done; review stage – where am I now; learning stage – what am I learning; and adapting stage – how to enhance my learning (Inglar *et al.*, 2003).

Scientists (Shon, 1987; Richardson and Wolfe, 2001) distinguish several kinds of reflection:

- The reflection before the activity, which helps to evaluate the available experience and, after the analysis of the current situation and possible influences, to design the process of the situation;

- The reflection during the activity allows to monitor, critically evaluate activity or learning goals, attitudes, feelings, ideas and actions, helps to understand the meaning of the activity or learning. At this stage, theory and practice are related, it is looked for new ideas, ways and strategies, which are integrated into activity, experimentation is going on and a new experience is acquired;
- The reflection after the activity helps to evaluate the activity and gained experience, consciously comprehend the lessons learned and what needs to be changed, and that encourages the planning of new experiences.

Reflection during the educational process affects the qualitative professional development of individual and the development of professional identity. During the process of reflection (Jurkuvienė, 2004 by Raudeliūnaitė, 2010), the following is done:

Self-examination and self-knowledge are strengthened – it is the recognition, reconsideration and analysis of one's thoughts, feelings, attitudes and values.

Activities / learning situations are analysed. This analysis is related with knowledge of the most important factors of the situation, i.e., who and why causes such reactions and such responses in certain situations.

Issues and challenges which are related with the search for meaning and a new approach to certain situations arise. This determines the depth of person's understanding.

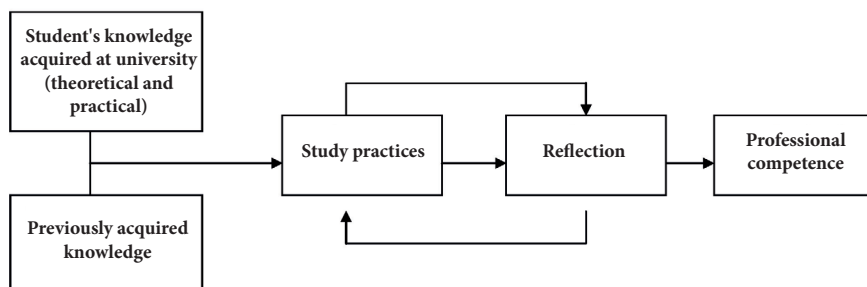
Synthesis concerned with the discovery of new understanding and meaningfulness of one's activity takes place. Newly sensed and updated activity encourages the development of new behaviour, thoughts, feelings, values and attitudes.

Possibilities and consequences are studied, and activity plans are drawn up. The new perception of person will result in his behaviour in future situations. Application of new understanding and meanings will mean the test of new attitudes and ideas. Thus, the reflection covers the identification, how differently a person may act in the new situation, what the results will achieve and how this will influence on situation, other people and the person himself.

Reflection is the process through which professional experience goes into learning, learning – into the professional and personal development,

and this turns into a more qualitative professional activity (Shelton, 1999). Reflection may lead to new skills, new knowledge and new understanding. The adaptation of new knowledge to already existing personal understanding, skills, qualities, attitudes leads to higher quality professional activity.

In order to prepare a student to become an expert in his field, there is a need to enable him to learn from his experience and to become the researcher of his own activity. Social work studies practice is an experience-based learning, when, seeking the development of social work professional competence, the obtained experience (behaviour, values, learning achievements, attitudes, feelings) is reflected and knowledge and skills acquired through practice are evaluated (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Reflective model of studies (Wallace, 1991)**

The most important principle of this model is the connection between the theory and practice. In this way, the possibility to implement the reflective learning cycle is composed: reflective observation, the analysis of activity/learning is inseparable from the concrete experience and active experimentation.

### **1.3. Inquiry-based learning**

Recently, more and more attention is paid to inquiry-based learning. The principles of this pedagogical trend include general knowledge, as well as learning to learn competencies. Such learning, according to Mažeikienė and Lenkauskaitė (2011), is particularly important in a knowledge society, where the most processes of activities have the nature of research. According to the authors, inquiry-based learning enables students to learn in a deep

way, develop personal, professional and lifelong learning skills, model professional and research practice. Students who get involved in various research activities deeper familiarize with basic concepts, issues, theories and practical reality of subject studied by them. According to Poškienė (2008), effective investigation may lead to the need of effective learning and knowledge of productive parity relations and specific discourse.

International (Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training of the Social Work Profession, 2004) and national documents (Social Work Studies Course Description, 2012), which define the professional and qualification requirements for social workers, focus their attention on competencies of researcher which enable the systematic and critical analysis of practical work field, investigations, and on their basis to develop social work practice improvement ideas, create social work knowledge and influence policy.

To educate a competent and independent researcher is one of the most important aspirations in Master's studies. According to some scientists (Kriščiūnas, Staniškis and Tričys, 2008), Master study is the fundamental level of training, which develops scientific skills and where show up competences of future researchers to continue, deepen and spread their knowledge self-dependent.

International education documents (Dublin Descriptors, 2004; European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, 2008 ) and the Lithuanian education legislation (Law of Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania, 2009; Lithuanian Qualifications Framework, 2010; General Requirements for Master Degree Study Programmes, 2010; Descriptor of Study Cycles, 2011) highlight the competence of the graduate, which is largely based on the ability to carry out research activities independently and to apply the acquired knowledge and skills in the investigation process.

Dublin Descriptors (2004) stated that a Master's degree graduate student must be able to do the following: create and (or) apply ideas, often within a research context; apply knowledge and problem-solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments in broader (or multidisciplinary) study-related contexts; integrate knowledge and solve complex problems, formulate solutions, assuming the social and ethical responsibility; clearly and unambiguously impart their conclusions, knowledge and basics of logic both to specialists and non-specialists; has developed the learning skills which are necessary to continue completely independent studies.

The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (2008) highlights three main qualification level areas – knowledge, skills, competence, which are also largely associated with the preparation of postgraduate to pursue research (Table 1).

**Table 1. Knowledge, skills and competencies which are relevant to Level 7 (Master)**

Areas of Qualification Level	At Level 7 a person shall demonstrate these characteristics
Knowledge	He has acquired specialized and forefront knowledge in a field of work or study that requires critical understanding and connection with different areas and enables to carry out research.
Skills	He has acquired problem-solving skills required in research and (or) innovation, in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields.
Competence	He is able to manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches. He is also able to take responsibility for the contribution into professional knowledge and practice, and (or) critically evaluate the strategic performance of teams.

Source: European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (2008)

Law of Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania (2009) and General Requirements for Master Degree Study Programmes (2010) define the purpose of Master degree studies as a preparation for independent scientific research work or other work that requires knowledge and ability to analyse and apply.

Lithuanian Qualifications Framework (2010) states that qualification of Level 7 (Master) is dedicated for complex activities consisting of a set of interrelated tasks, which may include several related fields of professional activities. Therefore, the performance of activity requires assessment and adaptation of expert forefront knowledge in professional work and in close or related fields of it, discovery of new facts in applied professional studies, creative application of theoretical knowledge and research results.

This level of qualification includes the ability to carry out applied research independently, provide consultations in the field of activity, coordinate projects aimed at other people's professional development and introducing innovations, analyse the results and present them.

The framework states that the level of activity and its environment varies extensively because of the progress of knowledge, know-how and organization of work in various fields of activities, the changes are difficult to predict and the activity is composed of constantly changing task combinations. Consequently, an activity change requires the ability to make innovative decisions based on research results, evaluate alternative solutions and possible social and ethical consequences of the activities.

Descriptor of Study Cycles (Table 2) also highlights the special requirement for Master's qualification – training for research competency.

**Table 2. Second study cycle results description in Descriptor of Study Cycles (2011)**

Areas	Content
Knowledge and its application	The newest knowledge in study or activity field based on fundamental or applied scientific research (research parts of art projects) which he/she is able to use when solving issues in new or unknown environment, performing scientific research or engaging in professional artistic activity, or developing innovations.
Research skills	Graduate has the ability to analyse, synthesize and assess research data necessary for studies, scientific (art) and professional activity and innovation development; he/she has the ability to integrate knowledge, manage complicated situations and make decisions when there is no comprehensive and well-defined information, and assess alternative solutions and possible impact on environment.
Special abilities	Graduate has the ability to use available knowledge and prepare new means (technical, methodical, informational and organizational/managerial) based on it necessary for scientific researches, studies, and implementation of cultural and artistic activity or innovation development.

Social abilities	Graduate has the ability to communicate summarized clear and reasoned information to specialists and other persons and evaluate it critically. He/she assumes responsibility for the quality and assessment of his/her and subordinate employees' activity following the principles of professional ethics and citizenship. He/she assumes responsibility for the improvement of his/her and subordinate employees' activity.
Personal abilities	Graduate has the ability to plan the process of learning in an autonomous manner and choose the direction of improvement in an autonomous manner, and study (learn) in an autonomous manner further. Graduate has the ability to use scientific research (artistic activity) data and has experience in research work and has skills of systemic and strategic thinking necessary for autonomous professional activity and scientific research work (artistic activity). He/she has the ability to make innovative decisions assessing possible public and ethical outcome of activity. He/she acts perceiving moral responsibility for the impact of his/her activity and its results on public, economic and cultural development, wellbeing and environment.

Source: Descriptor of Study Cycles (2011)

General Requirements for Master Degree Study Programmes (2010) note that the Master's degree program must ensure that the graduate who was awarded the Master's degree shall have knowledge in the study area necessary for the original and independent development and use, familiar with the latest theories, methods and technologies in the respective study area; shall be able to use the acquired knowledge, understanding and modern methods in practical activities, which demand analytical skills, innovations and integration of knowledge, including research; shall be able to understand the application limits of analytical methods; shall be able to evaluate research results and their reliability; shall be able to apply the acquired knowledge, understanding and problem solution competences in new, unknown and shifting environments and broad (inter-field, inter-subject) contexts related to the particular study area; shall be able to pursue continuous independent studies, to understand and make critical evaluation of theoretical and practical innovations in one's field of studies, to act effectively in conditions of insufficient information and instructions, to substantiate one's conclusions and to present them appropriately to



interested parties of different education levels; shall be aware of the ethical and social consequences of decisions made on the basis of one's knowledge and responsibility for them.

The authors of social work study competences development methodology (Gevorgianienė *et al.*, 2012, p. 12-13) with reference to international and national educational documents, as well as to documents, defining the professional standards for social workers, noted that the aim of social work Master's degree studies is to train high skilled professionals who are able to act creatively, innovatively and independently both in social work practice and in the academic field. Master of Science in Social Work, who is familiar with the research methodology and latest theories in the field, is able to analyse social work issues constructively, looks at them in inter-subject way and is able to offer innovative solutions to problems. He is also able to operate in the shifting and complex reality of social work – not only provides the social assistance, but is able to systematically analyse, develop and improve the processes of support. Therefore, the significant part of postgraduate degree program is designed to develop students' scientific, analytical, critical and creative thinking skills. Students should be encouraged to learn independently, carry out research and develop original research and social work practice improvement ideas.

## **2. Social Work Master's Programme Guidelines for Scientific Research Practice**

One of the main goals of the second cycle is the development of a competent researcher. Research has become an important part of social work Master's degree program because the research of various aspects of social activities supplements theoretical knowledge and helps them purposefully introduce it into practice. Such a strategy of study program, including the scientific research practice as an integral part of it, allows, according to Večkienė (2011), to take in and apply scientific research methodology, see practical activity as a space in which theory and practice constantly interact, build knowledge, develop transferable skills, more closely follow, analyse, reflect, organize and conceptualize the experience.

### **2.1. Creating a favourable educational environment for students' learning from practice**

Organizing students' practice at a complex educational environment, which is influenced by the quality of cooperation among the university and institutions in which students perform their practice, is created. The educational environment is defined as a dynamic teaching and learning space, created and influenced by the educator and the aim of education (Lipinskienė, 2002). The educational environment is influenced by educational goal, students learning capabilities, content, methods and tools, physical conditions of realization, and also by culture of people and institution that is realising the educational purpose. Scientists (Jucevičienė *et al.*, 2010) highlight the favourable psychological and learning conditions of educational environment. Psychological conditions include positive climate and the parity of teacher-student interaction, evaluation and feedback efficiency. Learning conditions are the following: the transformation of teaching objectives into learning objectives, the adequacy of teaching/ learning aims and needs as well as the adequacy of tools, methods, learning objectives and needs.

Personal learning environment includes the following: a) learning objective; b) the location and space, which size and limits the learner tends to see as a personal learning environment; c) information which is relevant to

the learner; d) understandable and acceptable methods of communication; e) other people who act in the learning environment (Jucevičienė, 2008). The author distinguishes a potential learning environment which is formed from the situations of human activities, human's participation in joint activities with other people, which results in the exchange of information. It is emphasized that the properly designed educational environment can foster a positive attitude towards learning, stimulate thinking, ingenuity, improve self-confidence and awake the sense of self-esteem and to enhance the learner's responsibility (Jucevičienė, 2001).

The organization, where students perform their practice, is one of the learning environments. Purposeful use of human, informational and material resources in practice location creates the learning space, which determines the students' learning. It is emphasized that the students' learning process in practice is successful in a learning organization, where learning culture is supported – openness to experience, flexibility, reflection of their experience, the desire to improve, creation of new knowledge and its dissemination (Kaniškauskaitė, 2011). According to Senge (2006), a learning organization demonstrates a supportive learning environment. Individual and collective learning is facilitated by a culture of open dialogue, communication, openness and transparency. A learning culture is also open to external sources of knowledge and influences and where new ideas and creativity are valued and recognized. A climate of openness and trust allows individuals to develop their ideas, speak out, question decisions openly and without fear of retribution. Individuals are encouraged to speak out and they know they will be heard.

In a practice place which is oriented towards learning from activities, exploration and search for innovation, a student is seen as a human potential for organization development who can contribute to the organization's growth and development with knowledge, ideas and research and at the same time implementing practice tasks to develop the necessary competencies.

The creation of relevant educational environment for students depends on cooperation between the university and the organization in which the student performs the practice. According to scientists (Rupšienė and Bartusevičienė, 2009; Daučytė *et al.*, 2011), cooperation during student practice goes on several levels: between the university and the organization in which the student performs practice and between the student and the

organization of practice place. In many cases, cooperation depends on the practice supervisors' personalities (Rupšienė and Bartusevičienė, 2009). According to Eidukevičiūtė (2009), for students and professionals who help him, practice supervisor's role is very important in the process of practical learning. Their interaction allows the creation of teaching practice process content.

Implementation of students learning in organization highlights the relevance of supervisor's educational competence. Olsen (1999) drew attention to the fact that the supervisor must have a hypothetical student learning model to determine their individual level of achievements and the path of development. Only then he will be able to help students gain professional skills, predict obstacles and help overcome them effectively. Experienced person's (called the practice supervisor) steps to help the learner are as follows: preparation and the first meeting, planning of the joint activity, foresight of chat scenarios, monitoring and evaluation of leadership to practice progress. Following educational functions are marked: supervision, planning, consultation, cooperation and evaluation (Laužackas, Pukelis, Gurskienė *et al.*, 2003). Supervisor's work is a complex administrative, social, psychological and educational activity (Autukevičienė, 2012). The supervisor must have technical and methodological requirements which the school of higher education provides to the practice performing student (Sadauskas, 2013).

The supervisor who takes care of the student during his scientific research practice should have sufficient practical experience and the competence of the expert. Expert is a professional who has enough experience to give advice, diagnose, assess and make recommendations on practical situations (Eidukevičiūtė, 2009). It is important that the supervisor is mastering research methodology and has experience in research. Then he will be able to lead the student through the process of practice. Supervisor's willingness to assist the student is also very important. In addition, social work students' practice supervisors must be good promoters of cognitive process and also good at learning process planning, implementation, evaluation, consultation, motivation, and professionals in social innovations and teamwork (Butrimavičienė, 2005). The supervisor needs a wide range of competencies. According to Sadauskas (2013), competencies of supervisor are based not only on professional and personal, but also on managerial, administrative, adult education and consultation skills.

During practice, learners face difficulties, doubts and uncertainties of professional situation, so they have to discuss and analyse everything with their supervisor. It shows the significance of reflection in social work practice. During the process of practice, the social work supervisors have to be active members of reflective social work process. They would have to think critically and to encourage the learner to do so, provoke and be provoked, offer to the learner himself to mull over everything, investigate and draw conclusions (Kiaunytė and Dirgėlienė, 2006). When reflecting the practice, the student has an opportunity together with the supervisor to switch over several steps: to present the situation, which he wants to analyse, discuss the complexity of the situation, raise problematic issues, understand what is needed to change, develop, form and sum up the thoughts and to experiment (Kiaunytė and Dirgėlienė, 2006).

An important role in the process of organizing practices is allocated to practice reflection, which takes place at the university. This activity is identified as practice supervision and group's supervision at the university. Nowadays, the opportunities of social work supervision to develop the consulting practice on professional relationship are discussed. During supervision with the help of reflection possibilities, to evaluate one's activity and to develop professional social competence are created (Naujanienė, 2006). Knight (2001), Mullin and Canning (2007) have noted the relevance of educational supervision application in social work studies and educational competence of supervisor that determines a positive interaction of organization to the student's learning, and theoretical and practical social work knowledge integration.

## **2.2. Supervision of practice in social work Master's degree studies**

### **Practice supervision concept, goals and models**

In European schools of social work, the tendency is increasing that for the application of supervision in study practice the ones that are responsible are academic institutions, and supervision for social work professionals traditionally is offered by specialized institutions – schools or associations of supervisors, such as the Association of National Organisations for Supervision in Europe – ANSE, Lithuanian Association of Supervisors

(Petrauskienė and Raudeliūnaitė, 2012). In Lithuania, as in other European countries, responsibility for the application of supervision in study practice, first of all, belongs to the lecturers of academic institutions, who organize student teaching practices.

For more than 10 years in Lithuanian universities (Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda, Vytautas Magnus University) students' supervision (known as the reflected practice or supervision of practice) is included in social work degree programs. It is complied with the provision that the social work practice performed by students is full-fledged only when a special space and time for reflection is ensured. Only then student's learning goes purposeful and structurally seeks the objectives of practice program. It is recognized that supervision of practice helps the future social workers to acquire reflection skills, critically analyse one's work situations and effectively participate in the process of supervision (Aleksienė and Kurapkaitienė, 2011).

Supervision of student practice is based on the reflection, which is identified as a learning tool for learning from experience and accumulating experience (Schon, 1987; Boud *et al.*, 2005), forming new insights and the prospects of activity and certain thinking skills – it is the discovery of potential professional subject's powers, their spread and successful use in making the profession significant (Kavaliauskienė, 2010).

According to Kadushin and Harkness (2002), there are three main functions of supervision, such as the following ones: control (administrative), education (teaching/learning) and support (maintenance). The control function still plays an important role in the U.S. professional supervision concept, but in the European countries, this function practically disappeared in favour of the self-managed learning methodology, based on reflection and learning.

Authors Van Hees and Geibler-Piltz (2010), who researched European (Belgium, Croatia, Germany, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands and Slovenia) conceptions of supervision for social work students practice, emphasized the educational and support functions, focused on students personal and professional development, and autonomous learning, the reflection and meditation of personal and professional experience, the integration of knowledge, skills and professional attitude. However, the authors drew attention to the fact that the supervision of students practice (unlike the supervision of professionals activities) is the integral part of

study program – the training/learning process, which is regulated and checked in the academic environment (it is controlled and the assessment of results is performed), so normally it requires to take necessary decisions or even sanctions, although it provokes the discussions and deliberations between students and lecturers, such as the following: Is there a need to check the students practice diaries? Should student activities and learning experiences in practice and reflection be assessed by a mark? Another important aspect would be the fact that the lecturer of academic institution who is responsible for student practice (the supervisor) may require written reports and reflections from students in order to encourage the students to take responsibility for their own learning process (Staniulevičienė and Večkienė, 2009). Petrauskienė and Raudeliūnaitė (2012), with reference to the work experience with individual students and their groups, also think that, for example, written work of practice, especially the part of writing reflection, very often is seen by students as a vague and daunting task, and they often suffer brain “disturbances” or can only abstract the tasks of activity, but as soon as they absorb and discuss the recommended model of reflection structure and questions, the reflection writing becomes another learning tool.

According to the authors, the other unique aspect is that the students are young people who are still looking for their professional identity, and so it is expected that involvement in supervision meetings, who are based on reflection, during the process of the study may help them discover the learning style and the touch of performance. Students during the process of supervision reflect two different cultures – the academic and the professional reality, so to a person, who performs the role of the supervisor, it is important to consider the fact that in some cases, individual students may experience stress or even “a practice shock” (Van Hees, 2011). For example, a student can get into a practice place, where many conflicts can arise between personal, professional morals and the culture of organization, so it will be difficult for the student to implement the learning tasks, which were prescribed by the university, in practice. During study practice, a complex reality of the profession may be revealed, as it occurs during the real student’s confrontation with social work practice and himself, as the future professional, and significant professional skills needed to work in the chosen field are gained.

Supervision of students is characterized as a process, in which the main objective is to connect the analytical and investigative practice with training/learning, providing the full support to the student and helping to accomplish the following tasks:

- to define one's approach to social work and practice;
- to analyse the concept of practical professional work;
- to integrate theoretical basics and the principles of professional activity;
- to help master the methodology;
- to increase the process of knowledge and skills acquisition;
- to introduce the supervision as the method for social work improvement (Introduction of Social Work Professional Activity, 2007).

The supervision of student refers to the process of becoming a specialist, which emphasizes the supervisor's support to the student, helping to develop research, analytical and critical approach to reality. During the process of supervision, the student is enabled to develop the theory of his profession, reflecting experience and personal knowledge, thinking about the value system for substantiation of his activity (Van Hees and Geibler-Piltz, 2010; Van Hess, 2011). The theory explaining human development through activities states that a person forms a peculiar understanding of phenomenon or activity, i.e., creates his own theory. There are distinguished ideological theory and the theory of serviceability. A person acknowledges, understands and commits to comply with ideological theory in his activities. However, it may or may not coincide with the theory of serviceability, the existence of which is inferred from the actions performed by a person. Therefore, to make a person to identify his theory of serviceability constantly and to combine it with ideological theory, it is necessary to reflect on activities constantly (Jucevičienė, 2001; Kavaliauskienė, 2010).

Students are motivated to explore the specific features of their profession, apply social work theories and methods, reflect on their actions and thus learn the profession. Meetings which take place in supervision process are described as "a creative environment", in which the students form their own professional identity with the help of the supervisor or supervisory group, while ensuring a safe and trusting environment. The



students gain an understanding that the learning process is the condition of their career development, i.e., one of the aims of lifelong learning. This is a time-consuming process, thus, “the supervision may need half a year, year and sometimes the whole professional life” (Naujanienė, 2006). Supervision should accompany students throughout all their professional life, enhance their sensitivity and attentiveness to the client’s feelings, enable them to use the supervision in the future, considering the individual, complex social issues, also to act ethically – to gain reading skills of moral dilemmas, reflect the ambiguities and paradoxes of professional intervention (Snieskienė, 2010). The main task is to help the student to form a cognitive, open to dialogue and inclined to search for alternative solutions way of thinking and actions related with practical activity, to improve the skills of reflective social work specialist (Introduction of Professional Activity, 2007).

There are distinguished fundamental concepts, such as a reflective practitioner, who provides support and integrated supervision, which are applied in the process of social work program practice of European universities, but the application of models is different. The supervision application models for students studying social work in German and Swedish universities are different in a way that the process (meeting) is organized outside the university. This model is based on two fundamental principles – supervision is treated as independent (external) and is provided by a qualified supervisor. The privilege (and competence) to implement the supervision process in Germany is acquired in specialized agencies which offer supervision training programs. The exponents of this model recognize the fact that supervision learning should be held in an open environment, where there is no conflict of assessment or fight of powers. Thus, the student supervision of this model is based on a free and creative reflection and learning environment, in which there is no power or “battles” with teachers or the voltages of evaluation, and the disposition to provide new insights, based on the student’s previous experiences, considering the new choices of activities and constructing the learning perspective, is created (Van Hees and Geibler-Piltz, 2010).

The need of independent supervision for Lithuanian students’ professional development was highlighted by Snieskienė (2010), who focused her attention on the ethical objections related with the loyalty and arising for students during their practice. The author distinguished fields of tensions, which involve students host organizations, loyalty to

powerful individuals (e.g., head of organisation, practice manager/mentor/supervisor, university lecturer responsible for the student practice), obedience to the laws and rules of the organization, so students (and their practice supervisors) should be able to reach a professional unvalued supervision as a support analysing complex ethical moral issues.

As it was mentioned, in Lithuania, as in other European countries, the responsibility of supervision application in practice, first of all, belongs to the lecturers of academic institutions who organize student teaching practices. For example, in the process of teaching social work practice program at Vytautas Magnus University, the following members are involved: a mentor (supervisor at practice place), a tutor (supervisor at the University) and the lecturer of theoretical practice course, who is leading group supervisions (Naujanienė, Eidukevičiūtė and Liobikienė, 2010). The model of social workers' practice at Klaipėda University (Lithuania) ascribes practice supervisor's role to a social worker – a practitioner, and the University's lecturer implements student groups supervisions once a week (every other week, depending on the number of practice credits) and provides consultations to supervisors and students (Dirgilienė and Kiaunytė 2008). In Social Work studies program description (2012) prepared by the order of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, it is noted that in the second cycle of studies the practice must be accompanied by individual or group supervisions, which are led by a professional supervisor. The professional supervisor could be a person who is the Master of Science in Social Work or has a minimum of 2 years' experience of teaching social work subjects, who also have completed a minimum of 2 years of supervision training programs that meet curriculum standards adopted by the Association of National Organisations for Supervision in Europe – ANSE, and are participating in activities of national supervision organizations. However, the opinions of whether it is necessary to have a professional supervisor in the process of study practice, as mentioned above, are different in different countries. Of course, the authors of this study offer the tutor to guide supervisions in study practice, preferably having a qualification of a supervisor. According to Zorga (2007), it is important to follow the provision that it is necessary to define student's supervisor competencies and ways, in which these competencies can be acquired. Lack of necessary education, skills and supervision experience is treated as a problem of professional ethics. It is believed that the supervisor

has to go through the developmental stages from student's supervision to professional supervision. So, without further preparation, it is necessary to have the experience of the supervisor in the supervision practice.

Study practice supervision can "oscillate" from an individual to group supervision. Preference is given to the group supervision, because when working as a group, students have the opportunity to learn from each other and can help each other. Groups can range in size from small (3-4 students) and medium (5-8 students) to large (15-25 students). It is believed that the group of 15 or more people is too large to carry out each student's supervision properly. In addition, it is more difficult to manage the learning process in larger groups. Working with groups of 3-4 persons is most appropriate when seeking to plug into the process of learning and to create a safer environment for reflection. It is also easier for a supervisor to manage a smaller group, distribute the attention and lead a dialogue. Medium groups also have the advantages because the students have the opportunity to hear a wider range of statements about the experiences of colleagues in order to get a clearer picture of the social work field (Aleksienė and Kurapkaitienė, 2010).

### **Students practice supervision's administrative, educational and support issues**

Student practice supervisor can devote a part of his time to administrative aspects of student practice and other part to more process-oriented supervision purposes. Thus, in the initial stage, responsibilities can be discussed and defined, information on administrative procedures shared, and academic and other instructions given. The process-oriented supervision meetings are focused on feedback on the tasks performed by a student and his efforts to find links between theory and practice and insights. The student is provided with opportunities to reflect and think about his feelings, experiences and obtained professional skills. Administrative aspects of supervision may also include a meeting time, information on various recommendations, links that are important to work, evaluation and other activities. These aspects of practice are relevant through all practice period, but especially in the initial stage of the student's practice.

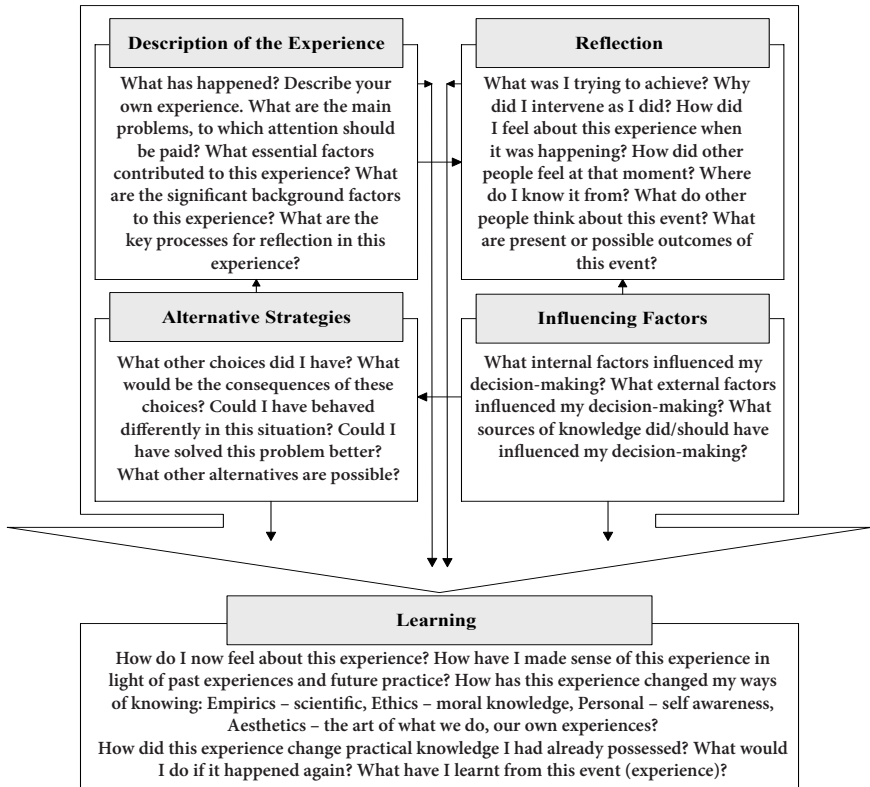
An educational aspect is the stimulation of reflection and dialogue, allowing the student to reflect on his experience in terms of considering the applicability of the theory and other alternative ways of activities. It is

important to provide the student with a wide picture of social work, create an opportunity to discuss and express his opinion.

In the reflexive process of professional education, it is important for a supervisor to promote the internal dialogue of the student. In the dialogic dialogue, specific answers are open, no matter what is the reaction. The supervisor can take the Socratic dialogue method to create a dialogic dialogue, helping the student seek the knowledge and insight, which he has and which comes from within without violence. The dialogic model can be also identified from the postmodern perspective, when the essence is not interference, but openness, interest and curiosity. It is a sincere hearing of another person's story and problems, without set theories and the application of explanations (Cajvert, 1998).

It may be assumed that the dialogic supervision model is useful because the student's practice supervisor is involved in the conversation as well as the student is. Practice supervisor's professional experience allows leading the student in teaching methodology and technology needed to outline the skills and apply them in practice. During such a dialogue, the student discovers what he needs in order to work professionally. During the dialogue, the learner gets the opportunity to reflect, explore and clarify his inner world and clearly to express both practical experience and theoretical knowledge.

In order to make learners aware of the benefits of supervision, it is important to familiarize students with the model of reflection applied in supervision process and its structure. Bubnys (2007) represented and discussed experience analysing models, which different authors (Kolb, 1984; Johns, 2004; Boud, Keogh and Walker, 2005; etc.) identified as learning from the experience, reflective thinking or activity models, adapted in the learning process at high schools. Noteworthy is a structured reflection model (Johns, 2004), consisting of sets of questions, arranged one behind the other and helping students to meet consistency (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. C. Johns model of structured reflection**  
(according to Bubnys and Žydzūnaitė, 2010)

The four question blocks/phases integrate into the fifth block – learning. Learning outcomes are found not only in analysing and finding the answer to the last block of questions, but begin to emerge during the description of the situation.

Supervision of students practice is based on the continuous student(s) reflection and self-evaluation, which enable the learner to record the achievements of competencies, changes in critical thinking and reflection skills during all study practice and ensure an opportunity to monitor their learning actively.

*In summary, it should be noted that training/learning and support functions dominate in the concept of practice supervision. They are focused*

*on training reflexive social work specialist's critical thinking and match with the educational and results evaluation concept realizable in academic educational institution – creating favourable conditions for participants of supervision process to search for meaning and seek personal and professional development, acquiring lifelong learning skills. Only a secure and friendly environment for social work students reflection will make them to feel understood and heard as equal participants of practice supervision process.*

### **2.3. Assessment for student learning in practice**

Educational paradigm transformation from teaching to learning, which changes the conceptual basics of studies, highlights considering the students' assessment aims, meaning and importance in the study process. Perception and acceptance of the student as a self-governing learner and his personal responsibility for the learning process and its results are very important for the process based on learning paradigm. The aim of the assessment in learning paradigm is to reinforce and encourage learning, to check understanding and the skills and attitudes that accompany it (Morkūnienė, 2008). The assessment is based on the active interaction between the evaluative and the evaluator and is described as a feedback on the achievements and progress of a student, the help to develop him as a person, and as a tool for motivation and as one of the tools to assess training/learning methods suitability and the teaching process efficiency (Sadauskas, 2013).

According to the concept of competence-based education, the starting point of study subjects design is the identification of learning outcomes or competencies that students should acquire. The evaluation of students skills acquired during practice must be provided and described. Van Hees and Geibler-Piltz (2010) noted that if the studies practice program tasks, competencies and assessment criteria were not clearly formulated, the student assessment would become problematic. Competencies important for students' scientific research practice are those that seek to develop personal reflective practitioner expertise and professional readiness to the systematic and critical analysis of practical work field, carry out researches and on their basis develop the ideas of social work practice improvement and create social work knowledge.

The student's role in the evaluation process is recognized as the most important. The concept of student-oriented education is based on the

attitude that the students themselves create a learning process and follow such means as the plans of personal development and studies practice portfolio, which main purpose is the self-evaluation on the basis of pre-known and analysed assessment criteria. According to this perspective, a student learns from the received results, related with the content, learning progress and development.

Scholars have stressed the need to assess the student's learning process and the progress made in it, raising the importance of formative assessment methods. These methods provide valuable information how far the student gets closer to the objectives of the curriculum, allows the student critically analyse and design his own learning (Burkšaitienė, 2004). Formative assessment determines the learning progress, provides detailed feedback on learning and development opportunities. Such assessment aims at the effectiveness of studies and it is associated with a permanent diagnosis of learning outcomes, and the feedback allows the learner to understand the directions for learning improvement (Dunn, Morgan, O'Reily and Parry, 2004).

Reflectivity is particularly highlighted at social work because a reflexive social worker integrates knowledge, skills and values into his work and learns from experience. According to Stanikūnienė (2007), learning from one's own experience is a reflexive exploration of one's activity, environment, knowledge and personality, leading to conscious cognition and development of one's personal theories of activities, the creation of new knowledge and its application in a real practice.

Social work study process is based on continuous reflection and self-assessment which enables to record the alternation of student competencies achievements, critical thinking and reflection skills, and allows the student to control his learning actively (Sadauskas, 2013). Reflection is an important part of social work program practice. One of the main requirements in practice evaluation process is reflection at meetings and reflection in writing, which illustrates student's efforts, progress, achievements and the acquisition/development of research competencies. Therefore, practice tasks are oriented towards the stimulation of reflection: practice planning activities, reflective journal writing, reflection on practice with a mentor, group reflections, competence skills portfolio preparation, raise of hypotheses and problematic questions and their decision search.

Burkšaitienė suggests using a portfolio as a formative assessment method. According to the author, the learning achievements portfolio is a

multi-functional method, which is important in several respects: it functions as an innovative training/learning method and as a valuable and non-traditional/alternative instrument of assessment and recognition, moving from the traditional teaching paradigm to the learning paradigm. In this sense, the learning achievements portfolio combines the learning process in different environments and the process of outcomes evaluation. The author points out that the efficiency of portfolio, as a non-traditional training/learning method in the training/learning process, consists of systematically organized collection of work: this enables both the learner and the teacher to monitor the growth of knowledge and skills in a subject field over a defined period of time, develops an understanding of the learning process, encourages motivation to study and reinforce to seek the learning objectives, highlights the lessons learned, helps assess oneself as a learner – constantly to review one's own tasks, reflect on one's own progress and decide what skills, competences need to be improved, enables the teacher to provide the student with applied tasks for which it is necessary to demonstrate the skills and generate or apply acquired knowledge, allows the student to provide feedback to a teacher – to get teacher's opinion on the progress or some gaps in the learning process. It is noted that the portfolio allows monitoring the immediate learner's experience (evaluating the tasks or the solution of the specific life problem), to assess the dimension of useful learning tasks and evaluate the learning process itself (the constant process of students' reflections and decision-making and final learning results are recorded) (Burkšaitienė, 2004, p. 91).

Learning achievements portfolio is a purposefully structured, based on self-examination student's works collection that illustrates his efforts, learning progress and acquired competencies (Laužackas, Stasiūnaitienė and Teresevičienė, 2005). The portfolio enables a more universal evaluation and involves a student himself into the evaluation process. For each specific competence a separate section can be dedicated, indicating on what activities the competence is based, giving the proof of activity and also the self-assessment activity's fact, revealing the person's proving competence. Reflection is the important part of the portfolio. Klenowski (2002) argues that if the learning portfolio, as a tool, does not encourage selection and reflection, it becomes an elementary collection of documents. The author points out that an important philosophical element of the portfolio as an active assessment method is "development conversations", i.e., meetings, when the progress



and future goals are discussed. For a successful use of the portfolio, time for reflection and dialogue between the student and the teacher must be found. The assessment of the portfolio is a multifaceted process that is characterized by the following features:

- Formative – it provides an opportunity to observe all-around and evaluate student's progress in seeking the determined goals in the whole amount.
- Multidimensional – it reflects a variety of learning processes, methods and achievements, reflecting different aspects of the learning process.
- Helps students reflect on their understanding, attitude to problems and their solutions, and to develop skills.

The portfolio provides students with the opportunity to reflect and evaluate their learning in terms of objectives (what they were seeking), learning outcomes (what was achieved), improvement of competencies (what weaknesses were revealed, what needs to be improved), meta-reflection (analysis of learning strategies) and the need for assistance (what help is needed).

The portfolio collection allows personalizing learning, assessing the characteristics of each student's learning style, as well as philosophical, cultural, psychological and other attitudes.

The portfolio as an assessment tool helps to achieve the following tasks:

- allows assessing learning of students, which is different from traditional methods as it provides the ability to monitor a wider variety of achievements;
- involves the student into the assessment process, giving him a more significant role in the development of his achievements;
- creates better conditions for interaction and cooperation between students and teachers;
- allows specifying the links among learning objectives, methods and evaluation;
- expands the understanding of what is taught and how.

One of the main advantages of portfolio assessment is the stimulation of student's reflection. Students are asked to meditate on their needs, goals, strengths and weaknesses. Reflection thoughts and learning regulation are described in surveys.

### **3. Master's Degree Study Practice Guidelines**

#### **3.1. Study practice organization and concepts interpretation**

Study practice is a part of Social work Master degree program study process at Mykolas Romeris University, during which the student, according to his speciality, works in a practice institution. During the practice, the student adapts and develops theoretical knowledge in practical professional work.

The student's study practice is carried out in state and local government institutions, non-governmental organizations which provide social and educational services for children and youth. Master degree program students can perform their practice in the institutions of social service administration, education, health care and law, activities of which are related to the child's well-being.

In the same way, practice can be performed at foreign institutions, bodies or organizations. Practice in these institutions includes the analysis of regulations, goals, objectives and specifics of their work, and theoretical and practical analysis of practical procedures, regulated by documents.

Organizations for practice are recommended and presented by the responsible lecturer of the university, or the students themselves can choose under a prior coordination of selection criteria for institution. There are recommended practice institutions with which the department has pre-contracts.

The list of practice institutions for student training is presented before the start of practice during the introductory meetings at the university. The students choose those institutions, where the knowledge acquired during the practice would be useful for a better preparation of practice research. For the practice place, students coordinate preferences with the responsible lecturer of the university. The student's desire to practice in a particular organizations is met if the institution of practice has enough practice places and social work professionals, and the student's selected research topic is related with the activity of the institution.

When choosing the institution of practice, the student should take into account the interests of his future: in what sector of activities he is planning his professional career, on what topic he wants to write his final paper.

Before going to practice place, the students with the responsible lecturer of the university discuss the issues of self-dependent work and implementation of individual practice tasks, the contents and time of reflection groups (meetings), requirements for practice, responsibilities of participants, research report preparation, its presentation procedures and deadlines.

At exceptional cases, practice can be performed combining it with studies after lectures according to an individual timetable.

The responsibility for the training practice is delegated to every student. Help is provided by the responsible lecturer of the university and the practice supervisor (supervisor – social work practitioner) who takes care of the student at the practice place.

The practice coordinator (lecturer responsible for the practice) may contact the practice supervisors at institution and make sure that the students practice process is running smoothly at the institution. Also, the university lecturer who is responsible for the practice responds to the students' or institution practice supervisor's complaints or conflicts.

### **Clarification of key concepts**

**Students practice (hereafter – the practice)** – the studies organized by practice managers (university staff/lecturers), appointed by the order of the dean of faculty, and practice managers (supervisors – social work practitioners), appointed by the order of the head of institution in which the student performs the practice. The training practice is focused on the learning from experience in environments, where the student learns to apply the acquired knowledge and improve the skills and competencies in the places of practical professional activities. During the practical training, the following methods of learning are combined: cooperation, monitoring, independent work of student (also covering the collection of data for Master's degree paper), analysis, self-assessment, conversation, etc. The application of these methods is emphasised in accordance with the practice process and (or) on the agreed practice tasks.

**Practice coordinator** – a vice-dean or other responsible person appointed to organize and coordinate the practice by the order of the dean of faculty.

**Practice manager (lecturer of university)** – the lecturer of university, appointed to lead practice on the recommendation of department and by the order of the dean of faculty.

**Practice manager/supervisor (social work professional from institution or organisation)** – the professional – social worker of the institution where the student performs the practice appointed by the order of the head of institution and who has the necessary competencies for the role assigned.

**Institution of practice** is the institution or organization in which the student has his practical training on the basis of the training agreement.

**Practice training/learning agreement** – tripartite practical training agreement signed by the university (or faculty), practice hosting institution or organization and a student (see the attachment).

**Practice period** – the duration of the period included in study programs, within the prescribed time in the student's practical training agreement. The practice of the Master of Social Work with the children and youth program is held in the second semester in spring and consists of 6 ECTS, at least 5 weeks.

**Practice program** – a document corresponding to the requirements of the study program subject, which reflects the scope, purpose, goal and objectives (themes) of the practice, organizational forms and methods of teaching, sources of learning materials, criteria and procedures of student work checking and evaluation, practice programs and ways to improve standards of its implementation. The Practice program shall be approved by the dean of the faculty. The practice program is published online on the university websites.

**Practice report** – general activity analysis or analysis of certain activities of the institution or organization in which the student completed his training, involving all the issues provided in the practice task.

**Practice review** – the practice manager's – social work practitioner's (mentor's/supervisor's) review on student's work and the assessment of student's practice (according to the implementation of practice tasks and goal achievement).

**Practice task** – the task of research agreed with the institution or organization and assigned to the student by the practice manager-lecturer,

which promotes the student to explore the specific issue of his study field or to solve a problem.

**Journal/diary of practice** – a consistent, comprehensive and systematic description of tasks, which have been done during the student's practice.

**Reflection of practice** – self-assessment of feedback and learning achievements during the implementation of student's practice task.

**Response to the practice review** – practice manager's (university's lecturer's) review of practice report in accordance with the general requirements to the practice report and satisfying the evaluation criteria.

### 3.2. Aims and outcomes of practice

*Aims of practice* – to create the opportunities for students of Social Work with children and youth Master's degree program to apply theoretical knowledge in practice and develop professional competence, to plan their career paths and to provide greater opportunities for institutions to find the professional staff.

*Objectives of practice:*

- to examine the overall structure of institutions or organizations and the activities of their departments;
- to learn about the work of a specific department (its role in institution, functions, subordination, prepared documentation);
- to learn about social institutions' working areas, solving social problems of children and youth and community;
- to evaluate services of social workers at office and the need of such services;
- to understand the specificity of social work with children and youth and the specificity of inter-agency – inter-discipline cooperation; to find out more about the areas of social work and the responsibilities of a social worker;
- to obtain independent professional skills: problem identification based on research; performance of designed tasks; case analysis; suggestion of solutions which are well-grounded and based on the research results, and the application of other communication skills in the sector of social service;
- to assess one's own value judgements;

- to carry out research and plan social support for children and youth as the ongoing process of changes;
- to collect the material for scientific research;
- to reflect on the experience gained in practice and evaluate it;
- to develop the practice report.

### **Outcomes of scientific research study practice**

Outcomes are verifiable statements of what a student after the completion of the program or its separate subjects has to know, understand and to be able to perform. The outcomes help to determine whether and at what level the student has acquired certain competences (Bulajeva, Lepaitė and Šileikaitė-Kaishauri, 2011). Study subject outcomes are the bridge of all study subject parameters. The outcomes reveal an essential link between learning and assessment (Pukelis and Pileičikienė, 2005). It is expected that the student acquires the following competencies: *research competence* – the ability to apply social work knowledge in practice: in social and research activities; *social competence* – the ability to participate creatively, independently and actively in the social reality and follow out the high moral standards; *information management competence* – the ability to analyse information respecting ethical norms and values.

Scientific research study practice is focused on the research and its dissemination in practice. The purpose of scientific research practice is to develop student competencies which are necessary to develop organization and hold the research in a particular practical environment of social work practice strategies application. During scientific research practice, postgraduates are performing the research, which data and data analysis are also relevant to the student's host institution and helps to improve and develop the provision of social services.

The scientific research practice is aimed to develop the following abilities: students' ability to organize and plan research activities; ability to work in a group/team; ability to analyse and evaluate social processes through theories of social work or other areas, national and international research and practice; ability to develop and strengthen the social work profession, investigating for new knowledge in social work and improving social work practice; ability to reflect on professional experience and apply the innovations in professional activities.

Scientific research practice aims are concretized by the following learning outcomes:

- The student will be able to define the research problem, purpose, objectives, hypothesis or research issues;
- The student will be able to choose appropriate data collection and analysis methods;
- The student will be able to carry out an investigation in accordance with the selected method;
- The student will be able to apply ethical principles to social work research;
- The student will be able to apply data processing and analysis methods;
- The student will be able to analyse and interpret research data, formulate well-grounded conclusions and recommendations;
- The student will be able to present research results to a professional audience;
- The student will be able to discuss reasonably on the basis of performed research and freely operating with research and other authors' data;
- The student will be able to reflect in writing and group professional experience of planning and implementing social work research and reflect his growth as a professional.

**The harmony between practice tasks and objectives** is very important in the achievement of expected learning outcomes of study practice. The right choice of tasks promoting students activity enables to transform study results into student's achievements.

For the development of research competencies during the scientific research practice, the following tasks shall be allocated: research project preparation, research performance and research report preparation, reflection in writing and orally, and preparation of competency portfolio.

**Table 3. Harmony between outcomes and practice tasks**

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Tasks</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The student will be able to define the research problem, purpose, objectives, hypothesis or research questions;</li> <li>– The student will be able to choose appropriate data collection and analysis methods.</li> </ul>	<p>Practice program preparation</p> <p>Research project preparation</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The student will be able to carry out an investigation in accordance with the selected methods;</li> <li>– The student will be able to apply ethical principles to social work research;</li> <li>– The student will be able to apply data processing and analysis methods;</li> <li>– The student will be able to analyse and interpret research data, formulate well-grounded conclusions and recommendations;</li> <li>– The student will be able to present research results to a professional audience;</li> <li>– The student will be able to discuss reasonably on the basis of performed research and freely operating the research and other authors' data;</li> <li>– The student will be able to reflect in writing and group professional experience of planning and implementing social work research and reflect his growth as a professional.</li> </ul>	<p>Research performance and research report preparation</p> <p>Reflection in writing and orally</p> <p>Competency portfolio preparation</p>

### **3.3. Roles and responsibilities of practice participants**

#### **Roles and responsibilities of the student:**

1. The student chooses practice place in accordance with the responsible lecturer at the university.
2. The student participates in introductory and experience reflection meetings, self-evaluates the learning outcomes, practical and reporting experience and observance of the methodical guidelines of the practice.
3. When going to the place of practice, the student shall have:



- A passport or an equivalent identity document with a photo and a personal code;
- A signed training agreement;
- An individual task of practice;
- Practice program;
- His CV.

4. The student shall arrive to the practice place in time.

5. After arriving to the practice place, the student shall hear out a briefing about the body's internal work and safety rules, learn about the objectives and functions of the institution.

6. During the practice, the student has to do the following tasks:

7. To be punctual, behave professionally and follow the internal rules of the organization, also to follow the practice program and guidelines for methods; To keep in secret the activities of the institution, without the permission of the practice manager (supervisor) do not reproduce and carry out office documents; To comply with the work order and discipline requirements which run at the practice place; To fulfil the work program and an individual task, to keep the journal of practice and write the practice report; To look for topics and materials and collect data for research.

8. The student provides suggestions to improve the practice.

9. If due to illness or other lawful excuses the student cannot come to practice, he must call on the same day and inform the practice manager/mentor/supervisor (staff) and the university's lecturer. The student who returns to continue the practice should provide documents proving the reasons of his absence to the supervisor (staff) and the practice manager (university's lecturer) in 3 days.

10. On expiration of practice the student must submit the practice report to the university's lecturer.

*Student's responsibilities* are associated with the general administrative-organizational aspects of training practice (e.g., to fill in the required documentation of practice) and student's involvement in the process of practice reflection and preparation for it. Attention is paid to the student's responsibility to participate in group reflection seminars, the aim of which is the self-assessment of practice and answering the student needs of feedback and support. The issues brought up and discussed at meetings or seminars may include environmental conditions which affect the implementation

of student(s) practice program, student's ability to cooperate with the organization staff and clients or resources required to implement the practice tasks and other.

**The role of the practice supervisor (the lecturer who is responsible for the student's practice)**

During the student's practice, a department lecturer, who is responsible for it, maintains the cooperation between the university and the organization of the practice place. He does the following:

1. Prepares recommendations for study practice tasks implementation in the institution of practice place;
2. Organizes introductory and experience reflection meetings for students, where the requirements of practical training performance, the contents of practice documentation and the program are discussed, pointing to the importance and rules of the Student practical training agreement, requirements of the practice report, terms, responsibilities of the participants and the preparation for the reflection meetings.
3. Consults students during the practice process;
4. Solves the problems which arise during the practice, if necessary, informs the practice coordinator;
5. Initiates the presentation of practice manager's (supervisor's – institution social worker's – practitioner's) review and recommendations for the students practice improvement;
6. Makes suggestions for the practice improvement.

*Practice manager activity's conditions.* As it has been mentioned, it is important to identify the roles and responsibilities of all study practice participants. It has been mentioned that the student practice manager is the worker of the academic educational institution, who finds the practice place (or helps the student(s) to find it) and is responsible for the organization of training process and consults student(s) during the practice. It is worth to notice that organizational and educational activities can also be delegated to the lecturers of various subjects, e.g., students' introduction to the study and practice places, social work practitioners training, associated with the implementation of student practice objectives.

Another uniqueness of the students practice manager's role is that he combines all activities of those who are involved in students training

practice process, coordinates the study practice tasks with the content of separate subjects and the research program, i.e., seeks to combine practical application and theoretical learning. He also liaises with the administration (organization) of the practice place, social work practitioners – supervisors and students, and the other concerned lecturers of the university. Also, he monitors and supports students in preparation for the practice reflections, prefigures meetings with students during their practice and maintains contacts with students with special needs, as well as participates in the process of practice assessment.

### **The role of the practice institution or organisation**

1. The head of practice hosting institution by his order assigns a skilled worker – supervisor, who is responsible for student's practice;
2. Provides the student with a work place, ensures working conditions that match safety and hygiene standards, etc.;
3. Coordinates the calendar of practices and a number of trainees with the university.

### **The role of the practice supervisor (the social worker of the institution)**

This role shall be given to the specialist of the institution who has relevant professional practice, with at least 3 years of social work experience, and is able to organize student(s) practice training process. He does the following:

1. Welcomes students/trainees and formalizes documentation;
2. Introduces the student to the institution's internal rules and safety regulations and presents the goals and activities of the institution;
3. Introduces the student to the personnel of organization and acquaints with the staff, with whom the student will often meet or cooperate;
4. Takes care that the student is allowed the conditions for the activity during the practice time;
5. Coordinates students/trainees work and consults them;
6. Discusses the practice program and individual tasks with the student;
7. Organizes student practice activities in accordance with practice goals and student's competence;

8. Informs the practice manager (lecturer) about the unforeseen change of the practice course and problems;

9. Along with the student, reflects the experience, gained during the practice, and provides feedback on the student's practice;

10. Approves the assessment of student's practice (see Practice evaluation sheet) by the signature and the stamp of the organization;

11. Makes suggestions to improve the practice.

*Conditions of the student(s) practice manager – supervisor activity.* It is important to describe the role and competence of the students practice supervisor in the university's academic environment, when the social work professionals, working in the institutions that provide social work services, take the responsibility to organize the study practice in their institution. Social work practitioners and university's lecturers, who coordinate student supervisors' activities in practice, should be able to learn and gain student consultation and assessment skills, be familiar with Social work with children and youth Master's program and the outcomes of students learning in practice.

It is recognized that in order to become a student practice manager (a supervisor), one should gain the social work education, 3 year social work experience, and it is necessary to be familiar with the requirements of student practice. The student practice manager (supervisor) should have the same profession as the practice performing student. The main goal of the practice supervisor is to help the student to think on the basis of experience, professional approach and values, and help the learner to develop his professional identity. The student practice supervisor plays an important role as a discussion partner, discussing the issues related to professional practice, such as ethics and approach to the social work itself, and also consults the student in the implementation of practical tasks.

*Administrative, educational and supportive aspects of the student practice supervision.* The student practice manager (supervisor) is often an active social work professional, and the consulting and support of students become the additional responsibility to other daily work, so at the initial phase of training practice it is important to agree on the time and goals of meetings with the student(s) in order to achieve the supervised and process-oriented practice goals. This allows the student to plan questions for reflection and submit them before the meeting, to develop the relationship

between the supervisor and the student. The best way to perform the reflection is a quiet and calm environment, enabling the student to express the experience at his own pace.

The student practice supervisor can devote a part of his time to the administrative aspects of student practice and other part to the supervision purposes which are more oriented to the process. Thus, in the initial stage, defined duties, shared information on administrative procedures can be discussed, and academic and other instructions can be given. The process-oriented reflection meetings are focused on the feedback on the student's research activities and efforts to find links and insights between theory and practice. Opportunities are provided for the student to reflect and think about the feelings and experiences, and also about research activity and professional skills, which have been improved.

The administrative aspects of supervision may also include meeting time, information on various recommendations, links, which are important for work, evaluation, and other activities. These aspects are important during all period of student practice, but especially in the initial stage of it.

The educational aspect, which is the stimulation of reflection and dialogue, allows students to reflect on their experience in terms of the theory applicability and other alternative ways of doing things. It is important to provide students with a wide social work view, to create an opportunity to discuss and express their opinions and allow encountering personal cases or research situations. The practice manager (supervisor) should be easily accessible to the student. It is believed that regular meetings can provide the student with the opportunity to discuss the progress of practical and research activity. Professional experience of the practice manager (supervisor) allows him to lead the student in teaching methodology and technology which is needed to highlight the skills and apply them in practice. During such a dialogue, the student sees what he lacks for the successful fulfilment of his practice task.

### **3.4. Assessment of practice results**

Basic requirements (*assessment guidelines*), according to which the accounting of practice results is organized and the level of these results is determined, are as follows:

- *Systematization* is a very important principle of assessment, covering the assessment's consistency, completeness and proper layout of the time. Assessment allows in time to identify both the individual achievements of students in practice objectives implementation and the students who need help. It also allows noticing students' knowledge gaps and taking measures to remove them in time.
- *Objectivity* is an objective assessment and rejection of subjective criteria.
- *The principle of versatility* requires to assess not only knowledge, but also know-how and skills, and the ability to apply knowledge in practice and associate it with one's own experience, to evaluate at all phases of practice (at the beginning, in the course of practice, at the end) and apply various criteria during the assessment.

When assessing student's practice, a *total (accumulative) assessment system* is applied.

Practice evaluation is held during the session according to the schedules approved by the department dean. Practice is assessed by the practice manager (university's employee/lecturer).

The final evaluation consists of the following parts:

- student practice manager's (supervisor's – institution employee's) assessment (20 percent), which is indicated in the practice review;
- student's self-assessment of his practice activity (20 percent) at reflection meetings;
- Practice research report (60 percent, assesses the university's lecturer).

*General criteria of the practice assessment* are as follows:

- The trainee is able to deliver the chosen area of work with children and youth;
- The trainee is able to highlight professional skills gained during the practice;
- The trainee is able to evaluate the quality of activities carried out during the practice;
- The review of the practice manager (the supervisor of the practice institution);
- The evaluation of the data collected for the research work (final paper) during the practice;

- The preparation of the practice report (formalization) and the presentation of the research results.

### **Criteria of research practice report assessment**

*The criterion of professional competence.* It includes assessing the student's ability to adapt and improve theoretical knowledge gained in the process of studies; tasks accomplished during the practice, their complexity and novelty, and responsibility; the quality of the analysis of the overall structure and functions of the practice institution or certain activities of it. It is also taken into account whether the strengths and weaknesses of institution activities are presented.

*The criterion of self-sufficiency.* It involves assessing the student's self-sufficiency performing the practice tasks and the analysis of structure and functions of the institution or certain areas of its activities.

*The criterion of activity and pro-activity.* It is assessed how much the student has acquainted with the structure and functions of the institution, as well as how and to what extent the student's practice contributed to the better functioning of the institution.

*The criterion of clarity and completeness.* The assessment takes into account the structure and clarity of enunciation, consistency, comprehensiveness and thoroughness of practice journal and practice report.

*The criterion of data collected for the final work evaluation.* It is assessed whether the student has collected comprehensive data for the final research paper during the practice.

*The criterion of report formalization.* The practice report must meet the requirements established for the practice report preparation (formalization).

### ***The system of practice assessment:***

- *Perfectly* – the trainee contributed to the work of the practice body/institution (practice place) very actively, perfectly adapted and improved theoretical knowledge gained in the process of studies; he could be characterized as initiative, diligent and innovative; he has collected comprehensive data for his research work and presented an efficient, methodologically and technically impeccable practice report.

- *Very good* – the trainee actively contributed to the work of the practice body/institution (practice place), adapted and improved theoretical knowledge gained in the process of studies; he has collected data for his research work, provided a clear, comprehensive, with some technical, but minor faulty practice report.
- *Good* – the trainee contributed to the work of the practice body/institution (practice place), partially adapted and improved theoretical knowledge gained in the process of studies; gathered data for scientific research, presented the practice report with some minor technical flaws of subject and analysis.
- *Fair* – the trainee partly contributed to the work of the practice body/institution (practice place), partially adapted and improved theoretical knowledge gained in the process of studies; gathered some data for scientific research, presented not a completely accurate practice report with professional, analytical, methodological and technical flaws.
- *Satisfactory* – the trainee not actively participated in the work of the practice body/institution (practice place), gathered not enough data for scientific research, submitted not a complete practice report with essential professional, analytical and technical flaws.
- *Poor* – the trainee passively participated in the work of the practice body/institution (practice place), incorrectly performed tasks given by the practice supervisor (employee of the body/institution), has collected data which were unsuitable for scientific research, submitted a practice report with major professional, analytical and technical flaws.
- *Very bad* – the trainee not properly performed orders given by the practice supervisor (employee of the body/institution), failed to collect data for scientific research and provided an incomplete practice report with obvious factual, analytical and technical errors.

If a student is not satisfied with the final assessment of practice, he may appeal according to general procedures determined by the university.

### **3.5. Research Project and Research Report Guidelines**

The research project involves research work elements, the implementation of which lets the student improve research competences and



develop methodological preparation. The design and organization of the research should include the scientific substantiation of the selected problem, the choice of research methods, cooperation with leaders and groups and reflection of experience in preparing the research project.

The research project should include the following structural components:

***1. Disclosure of a problematic situation and formulation of research problems or issues***

- 1.1. Relevance and novelty of the selected research problem
- 1.2. Scientific formulation of the problem
- 1.3. Object, purpose and objectives

***2. Research methodology***

- 2.1. Logical structure of research
- 2.2. Methods and process of research

***3. Analysis of research data***

- 3.1. Data analysis methods and the substantiation of selection.

***4. Literature***

Carrying out the task the student has to analyse scientific literature, familiarize with the exploration of the problem, formulate the problem, argue the relevance of the research, formulate the research object, goal, objectives and hypothesis or research issues, present research methods, research process, participants and ethics of the research and methods of research data analysis.

After the selection of the research topic, it is necessary to determine what constitutes its essence. It is needed to learn more about the research object: to find out what authors have done a similar topic, to read analogous or similar works. This helps to clarify the research problem, formulate the research goal, object, objectives, hypothesis or research issues, predict methods of research materials (empirical data) collection and processing.

The choice of the research topic must be relevant, important and new, because any scientific research or planning cause is the understanding that there is a lack of knowledge to explain or justify one or another phenomenon. The topic has to be problematic that would enable a fuller disclosure of the student's scientific potency and help to form critical scientific thinking. It is important that the research topic would be coherent with the organization of the practice place and relevant to it.

*In the part which discloses the problematic situation and where the issues of the research are formulated,* the relevance and novelty of the topic should be substantiated, the problems to be solved should be highlighted, the situation of issue exploration, identifying authors who have covered this topic, should be briefly described. It is necessary to specify what are the most important works, which were dedicated for this topic, what aspect of this issue (topic) have been discussed in the scientific literature up to now, and how deep they were explored.

In this part of the research, the research problem is defined and the research object, hypothesis or issues, goal and main objectives are presented. First of all, *the relevance and novelty of the topic* should be briefly substantiated, with the reference to the scientific literature, research and analysis of legal documents. The relevance is justified noting the authors, who were analysing the aspects of the topic, i.e., presenting the aspects which are already known, and what will be analysed and are important to the topic. The relevance of the research could be based on the following factors: needs of society, undergoing changes; difficulties and problems in practical work; previous research was not deep enough; the topic is completely unexplored; the time factor – a theoretical or practical problem inherent in this particular time.

The submitted *object of the research* is the theoretical and empirical analysis of the phenomenon of social work. There may be a social work activity, elements of social work process, various events, their characteristics and patterns. A specific person should not be the object of the research, but it may be the interaction of process participants.

An important characteristic of the topic analysis is *a hypothesis* or an implicit answer to the problem issue. The hypothesis suggests what the main idea guides the researcher, and the aim of the research is to obtain the approval or denial of the hypothesis. When using qualitative research methods, *the main research issues* explaining what the author wanted to reveal should be indicated.

Next, *the goal and the objectives of the research* are formulated. The goal is formulated briefly in one sentence and it must reflect the desired result. The goal must be relevant to the topic and it should reflect the research subject, i.e., what will be investigated.

The objective is like a stage leading to the goal. Each objective refers to an intermediate result, so it has to be formulated as a finite form focused on a result (not an action) – not to do, but to make.

The project must reveal *the logical sequence of the research*, what *research methods* will be used for the work. Also, it should be explained what data analysis methods will be used and the choice of them should be justified.

At the end of the project, *the literature list* containing only those references that were used in the project should be given.

In preparing the research project, the student consults with practice managers of the university and the institution, which provides him with the scientific and methodological support, makes comments and recommendations.

**Research report preparation.** A student doing research according to the prepared research methodology has to observe the ethical principles of the research. After the research, the student must analyse the research data by adapting the data analysis methods of research. The results of the research should be presented in the research report.

First, before presenting and discussing *the results of empirical research*, the research methodology should be presented: the purpose of the research, participants and sample, research ethics, research time, place and used methods should be presented.

Then, the results of the research are presented and analysed. First of all, the analysed object should be described in detail. It is necessary to present characteristics of research participants/institution, to describe its environment, paying particular attention to those aspects that are relevant to the analysed topic. Then, the results of the research are presented, analysed and interpreted. The empirical part of the research should be completed by summarizing the covered material. It shows the student's ability to analyse and critically assess the research results and to formulate the trends of future research.

*Conclusions and proposals* must demonstrate the achievement of the goal and the objectives. Conclusions must be clear and laconic, precisely reflecting the results, justifying every objective, which was suggested in the research. New information may not appear in the conclusions and proposals. Proposals must be specific, resulting from the research results. It

is acceptable to formulate proposals for the improvement of practical work, future research, and to refer to whom they are addressed.

References to listed sources and the bibliographic description of literature according to the rules of document bibliographic description should be presented in the *literature list*.

*Appendices* should contain not basic, but valuable additional material: the research tool (questionnaires, interview questions, tables, illustrations, etc.), which helps to understand the facts presented in the work.

### **3.6. Guidelines on student practice implementation for Social work Master's degree program**

Reflective practice of Social work Master's degree program students is based on the triad model (Van Hees and Geibler-Pilz, 2010), which recognizes the equivalent interaction among the social worker-practice manager (supervisor), the student and the university lecturer who is responsible for student's practice. The process of reflective practice is pointed to help the learner to develop professional competencies, to deepen and consolidate the knowledge from practice, participating in individual and group supervisions. Also, students reflecting upon their experience combine the assessment of their work and professional research, analysis and cooperation with other participants of practice. The task of reflection practice is to escort the student(s) in the implementation of research practice assignments, to help them in forming cognitive, open to dialogue and inclined to search for alternative solutions way of thinking and activities in respect of practice and research, developing reflexive social work professional skills.

For the practice manager (supervisor), it is recommended to choose the roles of the educator and the support provider, seeking to ensure feedback to students on practical and research activity achievements and quality, organizing conversations about individual achievements or group reflections.

Preference is given to a group reflection, because when working as a group students have the opportunity to learn from each other and can help each other. Groups can range in size from small (3-4 students) and medium (5-8 students). It is estimated that groups of 15 or more people are too

large. In addition, it is more difficult to manage the learning process in them. Working with groups of 3-4 persons is the most appropriate way when seeking to look deeper into the process of learning and to create a safer environment for reflection. Also, it will be easier for the supervisor to manage a smaller group, distribute attention and lead the dialogue. The average size of the group also has advantages because the students have the opportunity to hear a wider range of statements about the experiences of colleagues, so they get a clearer picture of the social work field (Aleksienė and Kurapkaitienė, 2010). However, it was observed (Van Hees, 2011) that organizational restrictions, including financial resources, the resources of qualified supervisors and time costs, can press the supervisors to work with large groups. However, this may result in the risk of damaging the conditions which are necessary for reflection, which are the following ones:

- to ensure security of all group and an individual group member;
- to acknowledge strengths of group members, when participants encourage and support each other; develop mutual relationships based on learning from each other;
- clear consensus and recognition of group members to follow the standards of professional confidentiality. In this case, it is not only the respect of a person's confidentiality, but also the maintenance of each individual group member's confidentiality;
- the recognition that each student is different. The students may react differently to similar unclosed situations, appealing on their experiences and emotions;
- a goodwill towards colleagues.

The implementation of reflected study practice could be determined by the requirements and responsibilities delegated to all study practice participants. The main condition is to create a favorable environment for reflection and in the implementation of learning practice objectives to lean on the concepts of mutuality, a clear division of roles and clarity of assessment.

As mentioned, social work practitioners of social service institutions, who carry out student experience reflection meetings at practice places (it is recommended during the process of practice to organize a 5-6 students group reflection meetings from 1,5 to 2 hrs.) are usually appointed as practice managers (supervisors).

- **Introduction, agreement and organization.** Student(s) practice reflection meetings should begin with the introduction and the agreement. At the introduction stage, a provisions formative conversation should happen between the social work practitioner (student practice manager/supervisor) and the student in order to help the student to develop his practice work and research plan based on the training practice program's goal and objectives, and outcomes.

In the initial stage of practice, the participants vocalize their expectations and commitments, seeking the outcomes of training practice and support cooperation, discuss the organizational issues of training practice, consider the dates and times of practice experience reflections meetings.

**Implementation of student(s) reflection meetings.** It is recommended to initiate student reflections (individual and group) by organizing provided meetings. Before the meeting, it is important to do the following:

- to provide the meeting room for reflections (individual or group);
- to make a preliminary meeting content (goal, objectives, previous commitments, time structure, etc.).

The first and the second meetings of reflection could be oriented to the students adaptation in the organization seeking the research practice goals and discussing the following:

- student adaptation or situations of tension through lowering anxiety issues;
- student experience reflections, the initiation of stories about research practice tasks, challenges, efforts and time resources;
- planning/imagination how to overcome difficulties or to improve research work, learning or relationships at practice. Discuss in detail the following questions: What? How? When to do/what to do/who can help? What to make till the next meeting? From what to judge that the efforts were successful?

The recommendations of the second and the third meetings, which focus on the student(s) performance evaluation and self-assessment in the middle and at the end of practice in the organization, could include the following:

- Student(s) experience reflections, stories about the achievements of practice, students interpretations on possible problems solutions;
- Farewell.

*Student group practice reflection meetings continuity at seminars held at the university*

*Preparation for the student group (3-8 students) supervision meeting.* For student practice, the responsible university lecturer during the introduction of practice program/induction course of the subject and seminars informs the students about the goals, themes, organization order and time of the student group reflection meeting. At the end of the training practice, the student prepares the research practice report and problematic issues or situation, which he would like to reflect with the rest of the group in a meeting at the university.

Student groups are formed by uniting the same students who have acquired reflecting experience in the process of practice implementation (e.g., the group gathered in the introductory course at the university before the start of practice, or all the students are from the same practice organization) into one group. In the absence of such an opportunity, student groups are composed by the university lecturer responsible for student practice or the practice manager (supervisor).

Reflection themes or issues for student groups (3 on 3 groups) can be raised by students themselves or recommended by the manager of the meeting:

- at the beginning the issues are presented which reduce student's self-confidence and anxiety;
- the student of each group presents his learning experience, highlighting the usefulness of research practice, achievements, encountered dilemmas and/or challenges;
- the students discuss "the most interesting/valuable from their point of view situations of practice" in group and choose the most relevant situation for further discussion;
- each student presents his considerations/visions about their behavior, position or decisions if they were social workers, and what research knowledge and the obtained data are valuable for the organization;
- each student submits self-assessment of his experience in practice;
- summary and farewell.

*During the practical experience reflection meetings (individual and group), the student is oriented to understand the following:*

- how he presents, explains and analyses his practice and research material;
- his ability to assess done work and evaluate the application of acquired theoretical knowledge in the practice;
- what is the level of practice objectives implementation;
- what is the value of data collected during the practice for the scientific research;
- his ability to raise problematic questions of practice and provide insights, substantiate his opinion, analyse errors, weaknesses and problems, and find solutions;
- what is the expediency of speech and the style of enunciation.



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## Annexes

APPROVED by  
Mykolas Romeris University  
Senate Resolution No 1SN-43 of 27 April 2012

### **PRACTICAL TRAINING REGULATIONS FOR STUDENTS OF MYKOLAS ROMERIS UNIVERSITY**

#### **I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. Practical Training Regulations (hereinafter referred to as the Regulations) for students of Mykolas Romeris University (hereinafter referred to as the University) shall establish principles for organizing practical training of students.

2. The Regulations have been developed based on Order No. V-637 On the Student Practical Training Agreement adopted by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on 19 April 2011, the Procedure of University Studies approved by Senate Resolution No. 1SN-17 of 27 January 2011 and the Regulations of the Study Programme Committees of the University approved by the University Rector's Order No. II-245 of 5 April 2011.

3. Practical training (hereinafter referred to as the Practice) shall mean independent working practice set in a study programme and organised for first and second-cycle students in Lithuanian or foreign companies, institutions or organisations.

4. Place of the Practice shall mean a Lithuanian or foreign enterprise, institution or organisation where the student does the Practice.

5. Practice Supervisor shall mean the person appointed by the Lithuanian or foreign state enterprise, institution or organisation in the place of student practice to be in charge of the implementation of the curriculum of the plan (programme).

6. Supervisor of the Practice of the study programme shall mean the person appointed by the Study Programme Committee of the University to organise and assess student practice.

7. Practice plan (programme) shall mean a document corresponding to the requirements of the programme (description) of the study subject and specifying the scope, objective and study results (outcomes) of the Practice, as well as the curriculum, methods of studies, methods and criteria of assessment, and

study sources. The programme of the Practice shall be approved by the Faculty (Institute) Council and approbated by the Study Programme Committee.

8. Practice shall be implemented under the Student Practical Training Agreement. The model form of this Agreement has been approved by Order No.V-637 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 19 April 2011. The form according to which a University student will carry out the Practice shall be approved by the University's Senate.

9. Students implementing international practice under the European Union and other international programmes may be subject to the Practical Training Agreement of another established form.

## **II. ORGANIZATION AND FUNDING OF THE PRACTICE**

10. The Practice shall be organised for first and second-cycle students (when provided for in the study programme). Usually, the Practice shall be carried out in the scope and time set in the study programme.

11. The Practice may be organized in Lithuanian or foreign enterprises, institutions or organisations according to the nature of studies. The Study Programme Committee may suggest places of the Practice for students or they may find them themselves.

12. Supervisor of the Practice of the study programme shall carry out the following functions:

12.1. He shall help a student develop the Practice plan (programme) and shall approve it, ensure supervision of the achievement of the Practice objectives and, if needed, shall resolve together with responsible employees of the Hosting Organization or civil servants problems related with the Practice of the student.

12.2. He shall provide the Practice supervisor appointed by the Hosting Organization with methodological recommendations (measures) necessary for supervisory Practice.

12.3. He shall organise the signing of an Agreement with the enterprise, institution or organisation where the student will do the Practice (Annex 1).

12.4. He shall ensure suitable use and completion of the documents of the Practice.

12.5. He shall introduce students to the requirements of the Practice and governing documents at least two weeks before the beginning of the Practice.

13. The Student Practical Training Agreement signed by the Faculty Dean (Institute Director) or the person authorized by him shall be registered in the Register of practical training agreements of University students and shall be certified by the seal of the University's Faculty (Institute) within 10 days from the date of concluding the Agreement.



14. Following the conditions set in the Agreement, the Hosting Organization may be paid for the organization of the Practice if this is not in prejudice to initiation documents and activity aims of the Hosting Organization. The amount appropriated must make at least 50 percent of the part of the tuition fee allocated to the salaries of the teachers, scientific workers and other studies-related employees without exceeding the regulatory tuition fee for studies which is in proportion with the scope of the Practice (number of study credits) if not otherwise agreed upon by the University and the Hosting Organization.

15. The work of the Practice supervisor shall be accounted following the procedure for accounting the work loads of University teachers approved by the University's Senate.

### **III. ASSESSMENT OF THE RESULTS OF THE PRACTICE**

16. After completion of the Practice, following the timetable set by the Faculty (Institute), the student shall submit to the supervisor of the Practice of the study programme a report of the established form including the assessment of the student's work by the Practice supervisor (Annex 2).

17. Final assessment of the Practice (passed or failed) shall be made by the Supervisor of the Practice of the study programme.

### **IV. OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTIES**

18. The status of the student doing the Practice in an enterprise, institution or organisation shall be defined by a trilateral agreement between the student, the University and the enterprise, institution or organisation where the Practice is done.

19. A check of the Practice performance organised by the University may be carried out at the time of the Practice.

---

Form approved by Resolution No. 1SN-43  
of the Senate of Mykolas Romeris University  
of 27 April 2012

## REGISTERED

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Place of registration)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Position of the authorised person)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name, surname and signature of the authorised person)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date and number of registration)

## STUDENT PRACTICAL TRAINING AGREEMENT

20      d. No.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Place of completion)

Mykolas Romeris University (hereinafter referred to as the University)  
represented by \_\_\_\_\_,  
(Name, surname and position)

acting under \_\_\_\_\_,  
(Name of the Hosting Organization)

(hereinafter referred to as the Hosting Organization), represented by \_\_\_\_\_  
-----  
(Name, surname and position)

acting under \_\_\_\_\_, and

student \_\_\_\_\_  
(Title of the study programme, course, student's name, surname and date of birth)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(hereinafter both referred to as the Parties), following legal acts of the Republic  
of Lithuania enter into this Agreement:

### I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. This Agreement shall be made for the entire period of the practical training  
(hereinafter referred to as the Practice) in the Hosting Organization.

2. A student shall carry out the Practice under the plan (programme) of the Practice.

2.1. Objective of the Practice: \_\_\_\_\_ ;

2.2. Intended results of the Practice: \_\_\_\_\_ ;

2.3. Duration of the Practice: The Practice shall start on \_\_\_\_\_ and finish on \_\_\_\_\_,

(Year, month, day)

(Year, month, day)

Scope of the Practice \_\_\_\_\_ ;

(Number of study credits)

2.4. Other conditions and the procedure of the Practice: \_\_\_\_\_.

## II. OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTIES

3. The University shall undertake:

3.1. To ensure necessary theoretical and practical preparedness of the student referred to do the Practice;

3.2. To appoint the Practice supervisor – University teacher who shall help a student to develop a plan (programme) of the Practice, ensure supervision of the achievement of the objectives of the Practice and, if needed, resolve jointly with responsible employees of the Hosting Organization or civil servants problems related with the Practice of students;

3.3. To provide the Practice supervisor appointed by the Hosting Organization with methodological recommendations (measures) necessary for supervisory Practice;

3.4. Following the conditions specified in the Agreement, the Hosting Organization may be paid for organizing the Practice according to the time assigned by the Practice supervisor for the supervision of the Practice under hourly fee in Lt set by the University if this is not in prejudice to initiation documents and activity aims of the Hosting Organization and if the University and the Hosting Organization does not agree otherwise.

3.5. Additional obligations of the University: \_\_\_\_\_.

4. The Hosting Organization shall undertake:

4.1. To provide a site of student practical training \_\_\_\_\_,

(Name and address of the  
practical training site)

to create conditions to implement the plan (programme) of the Practice, to provide information necessary for the implementation of the plan (programme) of the Practice and not to distract the student from the implementation of practical training tasks;

4.2. To ensure assignment of the Practice supervisor from among qualified employees or civil servants holding at least 3 years of working career in a respective field. The student shall detail the plan (programme) of the Practice together with the Practice supervisor who shall assess the Practice after it is completed;

4.3. To organize necessary briefings about the requirements of the employees' safety and health at work and fire safety regulations;

4.4. Based on regulations of the Hosting Organization or additional agreement with the University on the procedure and conditions of work, to ensure working conditions for a student complying with employee's safety, health and hygiene norms; if necessary, to provide working tools, clothes and footwear, other personal and collective employee's safety and health measures to a student following the procedure laid down by the legal acts if the Parties to the Agreement do not agree otherwise in the Agreement;

4.5. To assign tasks related with specificity of studies and practical training to the student and to ensure that no tasks outside specificity of studies and practical training are assigned to carry out unqualified work;

4.6. Taking into account the assessment of the Practice supervisor, to issue a document on the Practice carried out by a student or to complete an accounting sheet of the student practical training of Mykolas Romeris University while confirming that a student carried out the Practice at the time specified in this Agreement;

4.7. To inform the student which information provided at the time of the Practice constitutes a commercial or any other secret of the Hosting Organization not to be disseminated outside the boundaries of the Hosting Organization, and what fines (if any of them are set in internal documents) are applied for the dissemination of such information;

4.8. To inform the University of infringements of the Practice discipline and of the failure of the student to arrive to the Practice;

4.9. Additional obligations of the Hosting Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

---

4.10. If the University and the Hosting Organization agreed on the payment for the Practice when it is over, it shall be necessary to submit to the University a completed sheet on the accounting of the work of the Practice supervisor or another equivalent document verifying the time (in hours) allocated for supervision of student Practice by the Practice supervisor.

5. The Hosting Organization shall be entitled to allow the student to perform independently, without the assistance of the Practice supervisor, the assigned functions while participating in production or supplying services only if the

Hosting Organization makes a provisional employment contract with the student under the procedure prescribed by legal acts.

6. A student shall undertake:

6.1. At least \_\_\_\_\_ days before the start of the Practice, to prepare a plan (programme) of the Practice and align it with the Practice supervisor appointed by the University for the study programme and, not later than during the first day of the Practice, to detail the plan (programme) of the Practice with the Practice supervisor appointed by the Hosting Organization;

6.2. To fulfil diligently the tasks of practical training; in case of failure to arrive to the Practice in the Hosting Organization, to notify immediately of that the Practice supervisor indicating the cause and in the case of illness to provide a medical certificate;

6.3. To follow regulations (by-laws) and rules of the working procedure of the Hosting Organization or the additional agreement with the University concerning the rules and conditions of work, to keep in secrecy commercial and any other secrets and information specified by the Hosting Organization under paragraph 4.7 of this Agreement;

6.4. To use sparingly the property of the Hosting Organization and to answer for inflicted material damage in accordance with the procedure laid down by the laws;

6.5. To follow the requirements of the employee's safety, health and fire safety rules;

6.6. To inform the University if at the time of the Practice tasks not related with specificity of studies and practical training are assigned to perform unqualified work and if the Hosting Organization fails to create conditions for the implementation of the plan (programme) of the Practice;

6.7. To prepare a report on the Practice in accordance with the requirements set by the University and submit it to the Practice supervisor appointed by the University for the study programme;

6.8. Additional obligations of the student: \_\_\_\_\_ .

### III. FINAL PROVISIONS

7. This Agreement may be amended only subject to the written agreement of all the Parties. Amendment of this Agreement shall be an integral part of this Agreement.

8. This Agreement may be terminated:

8.1. If the student is expelled from the University, terminates studies or temporarily suspends studies (including students who have received an academic leave);

8.2. If any of the Parties breaches obligations set in this Agreement;

8.3. Based on the Agreement of the Parties, if such an Agreement is conditioned by unpredictable, objective and motivated causes.

9. A Party to the Agreement shall notify other Parties to the Agreement of the termination of the Agreement at least 14 days before that.

10. All the disputes which the Parties to the Agreement fail to resolve in good will and consent shall be resolved in the manner laid down by the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania.

11. This Agreement shall enter into force from the date on which the last Party signs it and shall be valid until the completion of the Practice and fulfilment of all other obligations due under this Agreement.

12. This Agreement has been made in three copies of the same legal power, one for each Party to the Agreement.

Particulars of the Parties

Higher education institution: Mykolas Romeris University

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Additional indication of the name, surname, telephone number of the Practice supervisor appointed by the higher education institution

Hosting Organization:

---

Additional indication of the name, surname, telephone number of the Practice supervisor of the Hosting Organization

Student:

---

Additional indication of the name, surname, telephone number of the student

Signatures of the Parties

---

(University)

---

(Hosting Organization)

---

(Student)



### 3. Assessment of the student's work by the Practice supervisor

Name of the enterprise, institution or organization _____	
Practice supervisor _____	
Position _____	
<b>Comment</b> (According to the achieved results (outcomes) of the Practice)	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
<i>Assessment of the student's work</i>	
_____	_____
(Passed or failed)	A. V.

**Final assessment of the Practice** \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor of the Practice of the  
study programme

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name, surname)

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Raudeliūnaitė R., Petrauskienė A.**

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*Methodological tool “Practice Guide for Master Degree Programme in Social Work with Children and Youth” is created for Master students who study social work, social work with children and youth, as well as for their practice supervisors, practice institutions where practice is carried out.*

**Rita Raudeliūnaitė, Alina Petrauskienė**

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